

SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE

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SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES 2013 OFFICER OF THE YEAR

For the second straight year, Salem's Police Officer of the Year is an individual who considers his heroic lifesaving actions "part of the job."

That humble, yet professional attitude, along with some quick thinking and precise reaction to a grave situation are the reasons Officer Jake Miller has been voted Salem's top officer for 2013 by his peers in the Salem Police Department.

"We are all very proud of Jake for being selected as our Officer of the Year," says Jeff Dudley, Salem Police Chief. "This is a well-deserved honor for a young officer who is very dedicated to not only this department, but the citizens of Salem."

On February 12, 2013, at approximately 10 p.m., Officer Miller was dispatched to the Route 419 bridge that is located just north of Apperson Drive to investigate a man who was on the railing of the bridge, possibly getting ready to jump.

"The call came into 911 asking that we just check on the man," says Miller. "I pulled up and barely had time to put my car in park when the guy started looking back and forth at me and the railing."

As Miller emerged from his patrol car, the man suddenly began to step onto the rail and get into position to throw himself off of the bridge.

"I sprinting toward him and grabbed him, and fortunately, Lt. Chuck King had arrived on the scene and both of us struggled to get him off the rail, away from the bridge and on the ground," he says. "He told me was going to jump off the bridge and kill himself if I hadn't of grabbed him."

The man was taken into custody and later evaluated by mental health officials.

"We never know what we're getting into, but nine out of 10 times it's not a good situation," says Miller. "Often we deal with people who are in a really bad place in life and you just try to do your best to help them."

Dudley says Officer Miller is always willing to help and that he displays a solid work ethic, quiet professionalism and a contagious enthusiasm for the job each and every day.

"Very rarely do you hear much out of Jake, but when you do it is always about something positive that he has done with a case or for the department," says Dudley. "He is quiet, but always very alert to his surroundings, which is a necessary trait for a good police officer."

Miller is a 2004 Glenvar High School graduate, who upon graduation enlisted in the United States Air Force and was stationed in Grand Forks, North Dakota. He served as an aircraft mechanic for four years and was deployed to Qatar during that time. When he returned to the Roanoke Valley and decided to become a police officer, his goal was to join to the Salem Police Department.

"When I was applying, I always heard that Salem was the place to be," he says. "The brotherhood here in the department is very close knit and at some point you end up working with everyone, so you always know someone has your back at all times. I am extremely honored that they selected me for this honor."

Miller resides in Salem with his wife, Ashley, and their daughter, Claire.

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